

III. REMARKS

1. Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-15 remain in the application. Claims 2 and 6 have been cancelled. Claims 1,3,8, and 13-15 have been amended.

2. Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-15 are patentable over Miller et al. (WO 98/47112, "Miller").

Miller fails to disclose or suggest informing a user of the availability of a plurality of different contents for downloading, receiving from the user over a first communications link an indication of a desired content and a request for the desired content, receiving from the user an authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content, verifying the validity of the authentication key, and providing the requested content to the user over a second communications link, as recited by claims 1, 14, and 15.

Miller discloses a method, a network device and a network for electronically vending pre-paid values such as cellular air time. The method is associated with user specific prepaid accounts stored in association with subscriber data. The prepaid accounts store prepaid value for a given subscriber. A prepaid account is decreased during each call made by the subscriber. Calling is prevented when the prepaid account has been consumed.

Miller discloses a network device i.e. a kiosk connected to a network by means of which value can be added to the prepaid account of a given subscriber. In the method disclosed by Miller the lump values to be added to an account are identified using PINs. A subscriber purchases prepaid values using a

network device, to which may be associated a cash deposition unit or a magnetic card reader. The purchase occurs by paying a specified value at the network device. Magnetic cards are authenticated using a PIN associated with them in the same manner as a standard Automatic Teller Machine (ATM). The network device informs a network switch of the purchase transaction. The network switch sends a debiting request to the subscriber's bank. The bank debits the subscriber's account or registers the cash deposited. After the bank has acknowledged the transaction, the network switch allocates a PIN and conveys it to the subscriber. Thereafter, the subscriber is able to activate the prepaid value associated with the PIN by calling a service number and entering the PIN. At that time the prepaid value is added to the subscriber's prepaid account.

Miller teaches that the user is offered a number of choices pertaining to the purchase of different prepaid values, but has no disclosure or suggestion pertaining to contents offered for downloading. Miller also fails to disclose that contents for downloading can be priced separately of a teleservice, such as video or fax, and a telecommunications connection that is used to deliver them.

Miller further fails to disclose the feature of receiving from the user an authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content. Miller discloses a prepayment for a connection and a teleservice as opposed to one for content. For example, associating the payment with the content has the benefit that there may be temporary interruptions in the teleservice and the telecommunications connection. The downloading can be repeated in the case of failure.

At lease for these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 14 and 15, and dependent claims 3-5 and 7-14 are not anticipated by Miller.

3. Claim 2 is patentable over the combination of Miller in view of Mueller et al. (US 6,222,915, "Mueller").

Claim 2 depends from claim 1. Mueller fails to provide the features of claim 1 missing from Miller and therefore, the combination of Miller and Mueller fails to render claim 2 unpatentable.

Like Miller, Mueller fails to disclose or suggest informing the user of the availability of a plurality of different services contents for downloading, receiving from the user over a first communications link an indication of a desired content and a request for the desired content, receiving from the user an authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content, verifying the validity of the authentication key, and providing the requested content to the user over a second communications link, as recited by the independent claims.

Mueller discloses a method associated with a calling card service. As known to an expert on the field, in a calling card service a user may place free calls from an arbitrary telephone line so that the calling card is charged for the call. The user dials a service number associated with the calling card service. The service number is in practice a toll-free service number. The user enters a calling card identity, a PIN code and the called party number using the telephone keypad when making a call.

In the method disclosed by Mueller, the user may also specify a service request for the calling card. Mueller mentions

voicemail and speech-to-text conversion as examples of services that can be requested by the user. The method includes checking to verify that the service requested is allowed for the user's calling card number. Thereupon, checking to confirm that the user terminal properties are compliant with the service requested also occurs. In particular the checking concerns the compatibility between media types, like video and fax, and the available conversions between them. Particularly, Mueller fails to disclose charging a user for actual content offered via the media. Rather than charging for content Mueller discloses charging for the use of a service system provided in the network. The service system provides the media conversions and other necessary operations pertaining to the user's service request.

As mentioned above, Miller teaches that the user is offered a number of choices pertaining to the purchase of different prepaid values, but has no disclosure related to contents offered for downloading. Similarly, Mueller teaches that the user is offered the choice of a number of value added services for solving problems associated with teleservices such as media conversions, but fails to disclose downloading of content and the prepaid charging for such content. The combination of Mueller and Miller also fails to disclose that contents for downloading can be priced separately of a tele service, such as video or fax, and a telecommunications connection used to deliver them.

Furthermore, the combination of Miller and Mueller fails to disclose the feature of receiving from the user an authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content. In both Miller and Mueller the prepayment is for the

connection and the teleservice as opposed to the content. At least for these reasons, the combination of Miller and Mueller fails to render claim 2 unpatentable.

4. Claims 4 and 7 are patentable over the combination of Miller in view of Geiger et al. (US 6,377,810, "Geiger").

Claims 4 and 7 depend from claim 1. Geiger fails to provide the features of claim 1 missing from Miller and therefore, the combination of Miller and Geiger fails to render claims 4 and 7 unpatentable.

At least for these reasons, the combination of Miller and Geiger fails to disclose all the features of claim 4 and 7 and fails to render claims 4 and 7 unpatentable.

5. Claims 5 and 8 are patentable over the combination of Miller in view of Lesley (US 6,188,752).

Claims 5 and 8 depend from claim 1. Lesley fails to provide the features of claim 1 missing from Miller and therefore, the combination of Miller and Lesley fails to render claims 5 and 8 unpatentable.

6. Claim 11 is patentable over the combination of Miller in view of Carlsson et al. (US 6,490,367, "Carlsson").

Claim 11 depends from claim 1. Carlsson fails to provide the features of claim 1 missing from Miller and therefore, the combination of Miller and Carlsson fails to render claim 11 unpatentable.

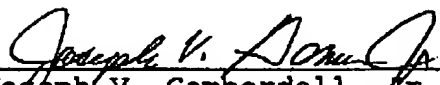
7. Claim 13 is patentable over the combination of Miller in view of Comer (US 5,610,973).

Comer fails to disclose or suggest the features of claim 1 missing from Miller. Claim 13 is patentable because of its dependence from claim 1.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,


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